

The security of our Nation should be bigger than inside-the-Beltway partisan politics. We need to learn from the mistake of the past, stop talking about exit strategies, and keep talking about freedom, democracy, and victory.

DEMOCRATIC STRATEGY FOR IRAQ

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Democrats' plan for Iraq. Last week, following the Thanksgiving holiday, I spent a considerable amount of my time with constituents listening to their concerns and discussing a whole array of issues from gas prices, to the new prescription drug benefit, to the war in Iraq.

However, Mr. Speaker, some on the other side of the aisle used their time parading on comedy shows decrying the current operation in Iraq and scoring big laughs at the expense of our troops. I believe this further undermines the argument of those who would claim that an immediate withdrawal from Iraq is a noble course of action.

During her big debut on "Comedy Central," the minority leader bragged that "60 percent of the House Democrats voted against the war to begin with," and compared to other Democrats, were "way ahead of the issue."

I imagine that statement probably does not sit well with our troops in the field. And, Mr. Speaker, for the other 40 percent of my Democratic colleagues who might also take exception to this statement, I recommend that they discuss their concern with the minority leader.

IRAQI PROGRESS

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, during August of 2003, I was with a bipartisan CODEL in Iraq. We were in one of Saddam Hussein's old bunkers and had a briefing from members of the Coalition Provisional Authority. United States State Department, General Sanchez, was there. They outlined their plan for reconstituting the Government of Iraq and civil society in Iraq.

This plan involved selecting Iraqi citizens to form an interim constitution leading to the institution of a provisional government, which would then set the stage for selecting representatives to the Transitional National Assembly, who would write the final Iraqi constitution which, after ratification, would culminate with the election of the new Iraqi government. All but the last step have now been accomplished, basically adhering to the time line set up by the administration, the only deviation being a somewhat condensing

of the timeline at the request of cleric al-Sistani.

There is no question that there are those in the country of Iraq who feel they would be better served by continued chaos in the region. This is not the position of most of the people who live in the country of Iraq. The insurgency, the terrorists, hold no tactical advantage. They hold no territory. This is a fight that they know they cannot win on tactical grounds.

The only way for us to lose this fight is to lose our political will at home. Our soldiers have done everything which we have asked. Congress should not desert them now.

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PRESIDENT SETS TONE ON WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, some say the U.S. will not win in Iraq, but in the American political debate, we can do better than that.

Last week at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, the President of the United States did just that. President Bush delivered a forceful and effective defense of our strategy and the stakes facing our Nation in Iraq.

Along with thousands of other midshipmen, I had the privilege of joining the President that day, and I have to tell you, from inside the arena, it appeared that the President was both at ease and determined. He pounded the facts about enemy, their aims and our progress in Iraq into the American debate.

From the outset, the President set the tone defining the first war of the 21st Century with the declaration that the enemy must be defeated. He cited their war against humanity, while he released a recently declassified national strategy for victory, which Americans can read at WhiteHouse.gov.

For me, the central message came when the President said, "We will stay as long as necessary to complete the mission." This clarion call and the continued determination of the American people was timely and meaningful, and an important challenge to a Nation that believes in freedom and has always demonstrated throughout our history that when the mission is just and the mission is clear, Americans complete the mission.

SECURE BORDERS NOW

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, while home over the past 2 weeks, constituents kept asking me, when are we going to do something about illegal im-

migration? When are we going to take this problem seriously?

Congress should act now, and one thing is critically clear: Our borders must be secure. Before we do anything else, we must stop the flow of illegal immigrants, and this must be done now.

A hard deadline is important, a date after which we will tolerate no violation of the border, and that is exactly what H.R. 3693 does. It ought not be too much to ask to bring accountability to the prevention of illegal immigration.

For that is what it is all about, is it not? Accountability. Those who break our immigration laws should be held accountable. Those who hire illegal aliens should be held accountable. Those who turn the other way and claim there is no problem should be held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, we have a large and a growing crisis in our country. It is our responsibility to act on behalf of our constituents and our Nation. Simply put, if our borders are not secure, then our Nation is not secure. The time to act is now.

SUPPORTING HOPE FOR VISION

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Hope for Vision, a dynamic new organization dedicated to raising awareness of retinal degenerative and other blinding diseases, to providing information to help those coping with vision loss and to developing the tools required to support funding for research.

The organization was founded by my dear friends and constituents, the Lidski family. The premise of Hope for Vision is that the American people can help speed the pace of development of treatments so that those losing sight will see again.

Each of the tens of millions of afflicted individuals in our great country has a community of friends and families and colleagues. Hope for Vision seeks to reach those communities and to enlist their support for their mission of vision.

I urge my colleagues to join me in spreading the uplifting mission of Hope for Vision until sight is a reality for all.

PROGRESS IN IRAQ

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, while President Bush clearly outlined his strategy for victory in Iraq last week, soldiers of the Second Iraqi Army Brigade were finishing their first day of independently conducting military activities in Hillah, Iraq. After undergoing extensive training and testing by coalition forces,

these soldiers have proven that they are capable of protecting and securing their country.

Each day, Iraqis are playing a larger role in ensuring that democracy and freedom prevail in their Nation. On December 15, over 225,000 Iraqi soldiers will be responsible for conducting security operations during Iraq's nationwide election.

The constant progress in Iraq could not be possible without the tremendous dedication of the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military. Our troops understand the necessity of victory in the war on terrorism to protect American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

GATEWAY COMMUNITIES COOPERATION ACT

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 585) to require Federal land managers to support, and to communicate, coordinate, and cooperate with, designated gateway communities, to improve the ability of gateway communities to participate in Federal land management planning conducted by the Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior, and to respond to the impacts of the public use of the Federal lands administered by these agencies, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 585

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Gateway Communities Cooperation Act".

SEC. 2. IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FEDERAL LAND MANAGERS AND GATEWAY COMMUNITIES TO SUP- PORT COMPATIBLE LAND MANAGE- MENT OF BOTH FEDERAL AND ADJA- CENT LANDS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Many communities that abut or are near Federal lands, including units of the National Park System, units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, units of the National Forest System, and lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, are vitally impacted by the management and public use of these Federal lands.

(2) Some of these communities, commonly known as gateway communities, fulfill an integral part in the mission of the Federal lands by providing necessary services, such

as schools, roads, search and rescue, emergency service, medical support, logistical support, living quarters, and drinking water and sanitary systems for visitors to the Federal lands and employees of Federal land management agencies.

(3) Provision of these vital services by gateway communities is an essential ingredient for a meaningful and enjoyable experience by visitors to the Federal lands because Federal land management agencies are unable to provide, or are prevented from providing, these services.

(4) Many gateway communities serve as an entry point for persons who visit the Federal lands and are ideal for establishment of visitor services, including lodging, food service, fuel, auto repairs, emergency services, and visitor information.

(5) Development in some gateway communities may impact the management and protection of these Federal lands.

(6) The planning and management decisions of Federal land managers can have unintended consequences for gateway communities and the Federal lands when the decisions are not adequately communicated to, or coordinated with, the elected officials and residents of gateway communities.

(7) Experts in land management planning are available to Federal land managers, but persons with technical planning skills are often not readily available to gateway communities, particularly small gateway communities.

(8) Gateway communities are often affected by the policies and actions of several Federal land management agencies and the communities and the agencies would benefit from greater interagency coordination of those policies and actions.

(9) Persuading gateway communities to make decisions and undertake actions in their communities that would also be in the best interest of the Federal lands is most likely to occur when such decisionmaking and actions are built upon a foundation of cooperation and coordination.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to require Federal land managers to communicate, coordinate, and cooperate with gateway communities in order to—

(1) improve the relationships among Federal land managers, elected officials, and residents of gateway communities;

(2) enhance the facilities and services in gateway communities available to visitors to Federal lands when compatible with the management of these lands, including the availability of historical and cultural resources; and

(3) result in better local land use planning in gateway communities and decisions by the relevant Secretary.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—For the purpose of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) GATEWAY COMMUNITY.—The term "gateway community" means a county, city, town, village, or other subdivision of a State, a federally recognized Indian tribe, or Alaska Native village, that—

(A) is incorporated or recognized in a county or regional land use plan or within tribal jurisdictional boundaries; and

(B) the relevant Secretary (or the head of the tourism office for the State) determines is significantly affected economically, socially, or environmentally by planning and management decisions regarding Federal lands administered by the relevant Secretary.

(2) RELEVANT SECRETARY.—The term "relevant Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, as appropriate.

(d) PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PLANNING AND LAND USE.—

(1) PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING.—At the earliest possible time, the relevant Secretary shall solicit the involvement of elected and appointed officials of governments of gateway communities in the development of land use plans, programs, land use regulations, land use decisions, transportation plans, general management plans, and any other plans, decisions, projects, or policies for Federal lands under the jurisdiction of these Federal agencies that are likely to have a significant impact on these gateway communities.

(2) INFORMATION PROVIDED.—To facilitate such involvement, the relevant Secretary shall provide the appropriate officials, at the earliest possible time but not later than the scoping process, with the following:

(A) A summary, in nontechnical language, of the assumptions, purposes, goals, and objectives of the plan, decision, project, or policy.

(B) A description of any anticipated significant impact of the plan, decision, project, or policy on gateway communities.

(C) Information regarding the technical assistance and training available to the gateway community.

(3) TRAINING SESSIONS.—At the request of a gateway community, the relevant Secretary shall offer training sessions for elected and appointed officials of gateway communities at which such officials can obtain a better understanding of—

(A) the agency planning processes; and

(B) the methods by which they can participate most meaningfully in the development of the agency plans, decisions, and policies referred to in paragraph (1).

(4) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—At the request of a gateway community, the relevant Secretary shall make available personnel, on a temporary basis, to assist gateway communities in development of mutually compatible land use or management plans.

(5) COORDINATION OF LAND USE.—The relevant Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with gateway communities to coordinate the management of—

(A) the land use inventory, planning, and management activities for the Federal lands administered by the relevant Secretary; and

(B) the land use planning and management activities of other Federal agencies, agencies of the State in which the Federal lands are located, and local and tribal governments in the vicinity of the Federal lands.

(6) INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION.—To the extent practicable, when the plans and activities of 2 or more Federal agencies are anticipated to have a significant impact on a gateway community, the Federal agencies involved shall consolidate and coordinate their plans and planning processes to facilitate the participation of affected gateway communities in the planning processes.

(7) TREATMENT AS COOPERATING AGENCIES.—To the earliest extent practicable, but not later than the scoping process, when a proposed action is determined to require an environmental impact statement, the relevant Secretary shall allow any affected gateway communities the opportunity to be recognized as cooperating agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

SEC. 3. SUNSET.

The authority of the Secretary to carry out any provisions of this title shall terminate 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) each will control 20 minutes.